

quite a bit more about in the U.S. Senate. It was a report of the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues.

I rise today to briefly comment on the status of the report and the testimony that was submitted today by the members of the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues, a hearing that took place in the House Armed Services Committee. While not the final report of this commission, the initial report does give indications as to their findings and, I think, warrants some discussion in the U.S. Senate.

A number of Members will recall, last year we had a spirited discussion about gender-integrated barracks during basic training. The discussion was centered around issues of, is this the most effective way to train our young men and women in the services, to have gender-integrated barracks? These are young men and women just entering into the military. They are going through basic training. There are a lot of difficult issues that they are facing, as they are being trained into a fighting force. Then on top of that, we put them in the same barracks together at night, after they have been side by side during the day. Ask yourself, are you going to be asking for problems if you have got young men and women who are put into the same barracks, right after a long day, next to each other with not a lot of other diversions at night?

We have had, unfortunately, a report of many instances of sexual harassment that have taken place, and worse, in these gender-integrated barracks. I am not speaking about basic training. I am talking about the barracks.

The report that came out today notes some progress in improving that sexual harassment and other problems that we have experienced with gender-integrated barracks during basic training, but it still invites the question of, why do we even ask for any problems at all? They are saying, the problem level is down, but why are we asking for problems at all by having these integrated barracks during basic training? Why don't we separate the genders during basic training? That was the point that a number of us made last year. A lot of people thought, let's put it off until this report. The report notes we have some progress, but we still have problems.

I think this hearing that was held today and the preliminary report that was issued merit a full hearing taking place in the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee to review this very issue. Is this the best way? Is this the right way, and is this the way that is leading to more problems than we need to confront of the current policy of integrating the sexes in their barracks during basic training?

I think not. We will continue to have problems we just do not need to invite.

I hope that the Senate will take this on as a serious problem as we start to deal with the report that comes out today.

AMTRAK "CITY OF NEW ORLEANS" DERAILMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, millions of Americans awoke yesterday to the tragic news of the derailment of the Amtrak "City of New Orleans" passenger train in Bourbonnais, Illinois. Late Monday night, the train, bound for New Orleans from Chicago, struck a tractor trailer at a highway/railroad crossing, throwing the two locomotives and 11 of the 14 cars off the tracks. More than 100 of the 196 passengers, 18 crew members, and two off-duty Amtrak employees were injured. At least eleven passengers were killed, including three Mississippians.

Both Tricia and I are keeping the families of the victims of this terrible tragedy in our prayers, especially the Bonnin and Lipscomb families of DeSoto County, Mississippi. June Bonnin of Nesbit, Mississippi was diagnosed with what doctors described as incurable cancer five years ago. However, her strong faith in God kept her going and inspired others around her. She and her granddaughter, Jessica Tickle of Memphis, Tennessee, are in God's hands now, and her daughter Ashley was severely injured. Rainey and Lacey Lipscomb, two young sisters from Lake Cormorant, Mississippi, also perished in this crash. We grieve with these families for their loss.

Mr. President, a group of students and adults from Clinton High School and Covenant Christian School in Clinton, Mississippi riding that train were returning to Mississippi after a spring-break ski trip. These young teenagers were jolted into a nightmare situation as some of the train's locomotives and cars overturned, split open, and caught fire.

I want to recognize the reactions of two of those students during this catastrophe. Clinton High School students Michael Freeman and Caleb McNair quickly recovered from the initial shock of this crash and went to the aid of their fellow students and passengers. The Jackson, Mississippi newspaper reported today that Michael located an escape route through a side window, which was now at the top of their overturned passenger coach, built a ladder from broken seats, climbed out, and pulled his fellow students out to safety. Meanwhile, Caleb searched the coach for his fellow students. They had rescued more than a dozen students by the time emergency personnel arrived on scene. Michael then assisted one of the injured students to a telephone so she could notify her parents.

Mr. President, the actions of these two young men may have prevented the other students from suffering additional injury or even death. Their reac-

tion during this unexpected and disorienting event was truly commendable, as was the response by local, state, and Federal emergency personnel, Amtrak, and the Red Cross.

It is unfortunate that the Nation's awareness of the dangers of road/railway crossings tends to be raised by tragedies such as this, only to fade as time passes. Drivers who fail to heed rail intersection warnings place not only themselves at risk, but others as well. More needs to be done to prevent such accidents. I intend to work with my colleagues this year to do just that.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hayes, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 774. An act to amend the Small Business Act to change the conditions of participation and provide an authorization of appropriations for the women's business center program.

H.R. 807. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide portability of service credit to persons who leave employment with the Federal Reserve Board to take positions with other Government agencies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 819. An act to authorize appropriations for the Federal Maritime Commission for fiscal year 2000 and 2001.

H.R. 858. An act to amend title 11, District of Columbia Code, to extend coverage under the whistleblower protection provisions of the District of Columbia Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1978 to personnel of the courts of the District of Columbia.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 24. Concurrent resolution expressing congressional opposition to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and urging the President to assert clearly United States opposition to such a unilateral declaration of statehood.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 3 of Public Law 94-304, as amended by section 1 of Public Law 99-7, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Mr. WOLF of Virginia, Mr. SALMON of Arizona, Mr. GREENWOOD of Pennsylvania, and Mr. FORBES of New York.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 540. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit transfers or discharges to residents of nursing facilities as a result of a voluntary withdrawal from participation in the Medical Program.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).